

Ontario's Universities: Innovative Solutions to Address Ontario's Teacher Shortage

Ontario is experiencing a significant teacher shortage that is impacting K-12 schools across the province. The demand for qualified teachers is most acute in French speaking, Northern and rural communities, and especially in high-demand subject areas such as French as a Second Language, Indigenous, and Technological Education.

Ontario's public Faculties of Education play an essential role in the recruitment and preparation of teachers and are committed to working with government and education stakeholders to address the teacher shortage, support student learning and ensure a strong and resilient teacher workforce.

Where We Are Today

Ontario's teacher shortage is the result of several factors. There has been an increase in teacher retirements, higher absenteeism and early career attrition, which has created new and urgent pressures on teachers. Worsening working conditions after the pandemic have contributed to burnout, increased costs, the use of uncertified teachers, and strains on the occasional teacher supply.

Projections show that this challenge will continue to grow.

67,300 – total number of new K-12 teachers needed from 2021 to 2030 to keep up with market demand, according to labour market projections from Stokes Economics.

5,800 – total number of retirements that are forecasted to increase annually, according to the Ontario College of Teachers.

5,089 – total number of new retirees in 2024, reported by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.

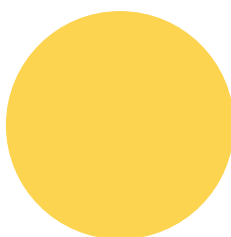


More Ontario Students Want to Be Teachers

Despite ongoing challenges, more and more Ontario students still want to be teachers. Applications to teacher education programs at Ontario's universities have more than doubled since 2017. Applications rose by 6.7 per cent from 2023 to 2024, yet fewer than half of the 9,019 applicants could be confirmed due to existing funding caps.

Demand for skilled trades teachers in particular has been rising sharply. Applications to Technological Education programs at Ontario's universities rose by 65.8 per cent over the previous year.

The recent expansion anticipates 2,600 new teachers by 2027 to help address the shortfall. However, further expansion is necessary to meet student demand to become teachers and to address the teacher shortage.



How Ontario's Universities are Responding to the Teacher Shortage

The public Faculties of Education at Ontario's universities are helping address the teacher shortage through a range of innovative program options, including:



- Compressed 16-month consecutive programs available at several universities, in order to produce more qualified teachers in less time;
- Multi-session programs designed to meet needs in French, Indigenous Language teaching and teacher education, and Technological Education;
- Programs that provide skilled tradespeople and Indigenous learners with pathways to become certified teachers; these individuals are often adult learners who have broad-based experience; and
- Regional strategies with school boards to support certification pathways for uncertified teachers who are already working in schools.

These innovative approaches help strengthen the teacher workforce without compromising the quality of teacher preparation.

Meeting the Complex Needs of Ontario's Students: Why Teacher Training Matters More Than Ever

Ontario's classrooms are more diverse and complex than ever before, as students have a wide range of strengths, lived experiences and learning needs. Meeting these needs requires more than subject knowledge; it demands educators who are equipped to adapt, innovate, and create learning environments where every student can thrive.

Ontario's public Faculties of Education prepare future teachers to meet this challenge. Quality education programs ensure that teachers are job-ready to meet the complexities of student needs in the classrooms, including mental health, AI and growing core content requirements.

Through rigorous, evidence-based programs, teacher candidates learn to help build Ontario students' fundamental skills in math, reading, coding and financial literacy, along with providing them with a strong foundation in a wide array of subject areas, including the effective use of digital technologies.

The role of teachers has never been more critical to Ontario's future. Ontario's universities remain committed to working with the province to support the training of well-prepared teachers to meet the needs of schools across the province.



By ensuring educators are trained to meet the complex realities of today's classrooms, we are investing in a stronger education system — one that empowers every student to succeed and contributes to the social and economic resiliency of our province. Today's challenges require our teacher candidates to have more preparation, not less.

Ontario universities are prepared to continue to work with government on these and other innovations to help meet the growing demand for teachers.